



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 12, 2004

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(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

MEDIA ADVISORY

West Nile virus Aerial Mosquito Larvicide Application

WHO: County of San Diego
Department of Environmental Health
Vector Control Program Staff

WHAT: West Nile virus Aerial Mosquito Larvicide Application

WHERE: Mission Trails Park, Kumeyaay Lake Campground on Father Junipero Serra Trail (West of Mission Gorge Rd., Thomas Brothers 1230 – G6.) Media Event signs will be posted to help media locate the venue.

WHEN: Tuesday July 13, 2004, 10:15 am

WHY:

1. Inform the public that the County of San Diego Vector Control Program is conducting monthly aerial applications of mosquito larvicide to key local area wetlands. The larvicide prevents larvae from hatching into biting adults that can spread West Nile virus.
2. Request help from the public in eliminating backyard mosquito breeding sources, reporting mosquito-breeding sources, and reporting dead birds.

BACKGROUND: West Nile virus, common throughout Africa, Asia and the Middle East, was first reported in the U.S. in 1999. Last year nearly 10,000 human cases were confirmed, and there were 264 human deaths. Additionally, the County found 5 dead birds, and one horse that tested positive for the virus. While the County of San Diego is the only county in southern California that has not detected the virus so far this year, the county is anticipating its' first human case of West Nile virus this year. Controlling mosquito breeding and eliminating backyard breeding sites is essential in preventing the spread of the virus.

Granules containing *Bacillus sphaericus*, a naturally occurring biological larvicide, will be applied by helicopter to difficult-to-access wetland areas with dense vegetation. Designed to dissolve in water, the larvicide acts as a growth regulator and kills the developing mosquito larvae. Laboratory tests and local field trials have shown the larvicide granules are extremely effective at reducing mosquito populations, and do not have an adverse effect on fish, wildlife, or humans.

PHOTO-OP: Helicopter fly-over and application of larvicide; remarks by County Officials; mosquito larvae and live mosquito-eating fish; mosquito traps; samples of larvicide granules; insect repellent; West Nile virus educational materials.

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